

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
for the

NOV 17 2018

Southern District of Texas

David J. Bradley, Clerk

United States of America)
 v.)
 1. Andrea Lizbeth ROJAS-Esquivel (1996/MX))
 2. Zendy Mariel ALMEIDA-Medina (1999/MX))
)
)
)

Case No. M-18-2365-M

*Defendant(s)***CRIMINAL COMPLAINT**

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of November 16, 2018 in the county of Hidalgo in the
 Southern District of Texas, the defendant(s) violated:

<i>Code Section</i>	<i>Offense Description</i>
21 USC § 952	Illegal Importation of a Controlled Substance / Approximately 16.42 Kilograms of Cocaine, a Schedule II Controlled Substance.
21 USC § 963	Conspiracy to Illegally Import a Controlled Substance / Approximately 16.42 Kilograms of Cocaine, a Schedule II Controlled Substance.

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See Attachment "A"

Continued on the attached sheet.

Complainant's signature

Nicholas C. Stott, HSI Special Agent

Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: 11/17/2018

Judge's signature

City and state: McAllen, Texas

U.S. Magistrate Judge Peter Ormsby

Printed name and title

Attachment "A"

I, Nicholas C. Stott, am a Special Agent of the United States Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and have knowledge of the following facts. The facts related in this attachment do not reflect the totality of information known to me or other agents/officers, merely the amount needed to establish probable cause. I do not rely upon facts not set forth herein in reaching my conclusion that a complaint should be issued, nor do I request that this Court rely upon any facts not set forth herein in reviewing this attachment in support of the complaint.

1. On November 16, 2018, Homeland Security Investigations in McAllen, Texas, (HSI McAllen) received a request for investigative assistance from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Office of Field Operations (OFO) at the Hidalgo Port of Entry (POE) in Hidalgo, Texas. CBP Officers (CBPOs) detained Andrea Lizbeth ROJAS-Esquivel (hereinafter ROJAS), a citizen of Mexico and driver of the vehicle, and Zendy Mariel ALMEIDA-Medina (hereinafter ALMEIDA), a citizen of Mexico and passenger in the vehicle, while attempting to enter the U.S. with approximately 16.42 kilograms (kg) of cocaine concealed within an aftermarket constructed concealed compartment in the front radiator area of the Volkswagen CC passenger car they were occupying.
2. During primary inbound inspection, CBP Officers (CBPOs) obtained a negative oral declaration for fruits, food, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, weapons and currency over \$10,000.00. from ROJAS and ALMEIDA. CBPOs referred ROJAS, ALMEIDA and the vehicle to secondary inspection for an intensive examination due to a lookout.
3. During secondary inspection, a CBP K-9 narcotics detection team conducted a free air inspection which resulted in a positive alert for the odor of controlled substance(s) emanating from the vehicle.
4. A physical search of the vehicle was conducted, and 15 tape wrapped, grease lined and vacuum sealed packages, weighing approximately 16.42 kilograms, were discovered concealed within an aftermarket constructed concealed compartment in the radiator area of the vehicle. CBPOs field tested the substance inside the packages which were positive for the characteristics of cocaine.
5. Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Special Agents (SA) responded to the Hidalgo POE to assist in the investigation. HSI SAs interviewed ROJAS who, after providing several inconsistent and false statements, stated she was hired by an unknown person in Mexico and to be paid \$500.00 USD to transport what she was told to be United States currency from the United States into Mexico. However, ROJAS stated she suspected she was in reality transporting drugs into the United States. ROJAS also stated her significant other, ALMEIDA, was aware of the smuggling event. SAs interviewed ALMEIDA, who, after providing several inconsistent and false statements, stated she was told they were transporting United States currency from the United States into Mexico, but suspected they were in actuality transporting drugs into the United States. ALMEIDA stated they were being paid to complete the smuggling events. Both ROJAS and ALMEIDA admitted to making several previous trips into the United States for the purpose of smuggling.